



u p d a t e s
December 2003

MISSION statement

Our responsibility is to assure that the health, fire, and housing safety needs of the public are maintained through adherence to those requirements established by law in the construction or use of every building in the community. This includes buildings in which people live, eat, sleep, play, work, worship, study, recuperate or are entertained. By accomplishing this mission the quality of life in the community is enhanced.

Building & Safety Department

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Lincoln, NE 68508-3995

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Mayor's Streamlining Committee

The Department has been working with a Mayor's appointed subcommittee to make recommendations on how to improve and speed the development permitting process.

Individuals have been appointed from the architectural design profession, homebuilding industry and commercial construction industry. Also represented is Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development and the Mayor's Economic Development Director. Recommendations are being discussed with input from both the private sector and department.

Some of the general topics being discussed by the Mayor's appointed committee are how to better provide information to permit applicants, educational opportunities for design professionals, improvement of processes and procedures for getting permits, department services and outside influences which affect permitting.

A list of final formalized recommendations will be completed in March for implementation. The department has always considered itself a partner with the private sector in creating safe yet successful developments that comply with high community standards. By embracing the constructive recommendations of this committee, the Department will continue to serve the community in a professional, efficient manner.

EDUCATION

Education and certification of staff members to stay abreast of technological advances in construction materials and methods. Ninety-three percent of construction staff are certified by national code organizations.

Contractor and design professional education programs are being expanded.

Educational programs to promote safety and code awareness for the general public are being enhanced.

Department ACTIVITIES

Implemented **Contractor Orientation** educational sessions for individual contractors to assist in their permitting and inspection needs, either in the contractor's office or at Building & Safety Department.

67,404 Building & Safety applications and activities were processed in Fiscal Year 02-03.

Forty-seven percent of building permits issued were issued over the counter on day of application in 2003.

Lap Tops Computers for Inspectors. All field inspection results are entered into the lap top and downloaded the same day for timely information to contractors.

Watershed Management Flood Plain Engineer position was added to coordinate flood plain reviews, sediment erosion control enforcement and other water shed issues.



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department ACTIVITIES continued...

Phone calls to Plan

Review are answered or routed by experienced interns so that phone calls are returned by the end of the day.

Specific plan reviewers

are assigned to individual homebuilders to expedite their plan reviews.

Staff attend monthly meetings of trade association.

Codes were updated in 2003, using Code Study Groups and Task Force Committees to insure input from developers, contractors, architects, and engineers.

National Code

organizations have five Building & Safety staff reviewing and developing new code language at the national level.

PROGRAMS in the WORKS

- Research **electronic submission** of building plans.

- Continue to implement **document imaging** to allow quick access to documents used in permit application review.

- Addition of **Accela "GIS"**, **"OfficeLink"** and **On-line Permitting** are currently in progress and planned to go live within the next year.

- Increase use of **GIS technologies** to retrieve information for decision making and reporting.

- **Permit Plus** software used by Building & Safety is being adopted by other city departments.

- **GIS** Technology provides data in a geographical format. Zoning, flood plain, etc. information can be retrieved quickly and provided to contractors and to the public easily.

- **Real time** inspection results programs are being reviewed for feasibility and cost.

- Continue to **enhance the Department web site** to enable contractors, architects, engineers, and the public to access information.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATES & USES



Electronic Permitting was implemented by Building & Safety in 1991 to automate and streamline the permit and inspection process.

Electronic permitting has reduced permitting time, improved customer service and staff efficiency. Today we process more than 95 different permit and activity types on Accela's "Permit Plus" software. We are able to track:

- permits
- plan reviews
- inspections & inspection scheduling
- workflow management
- fee calculation & collection
- web-based customer service
- telephone based voice response services
- inter and intra-departmental access to permit information

Each year as new software enhancements and upgrades become available, they are integrated into our system.

Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) allows contractors to call in their inspection requests at anytime of the day or night; obtain their inspection results over the phone; and check their prepaid account balance, registration and insurance status. Architects and building contractors can call in and have their plan review comments faxed to their offices.

Contractor's Internet Access enables contractors and architects to view their permits, plan review comments, account balance, insurance, registration and bond status, and inspection results live on the web. Inspection requests can be scheduled directly into our database by the contractor 24 hours a day.

InspecTrac inspection tracking system allows inspectors access to permit and inspection data in the field and to enter inspection results into their laptop computers. Upon returning to the office the data is automatically sent to the Permits Plus system and becomes available to the contractors via the web or IVR.

Images module allows documents to be scanned into the system and attached to an address and/or permit number, decreasing the time staff spends searching a file for information needed for decision making.

Workflow is used to track and document commercial building permit reviews internally and for other reviewing departments and agencies.

Commercial Plan Review comments are available on-line and through the IVR system.

Building & Safety Web Site: www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/build/
This site has information for both commercial and residential contractors on the permit process and how to use it. Enclosed is a business card to get you onto the web site.

Special Permits On-Line provides an interactive map displaying approved special permits throughout the City and County. Special Permit documents dating from August 2000 to present can be viewed.